UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/22455*
9 April 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

NOTE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The attached letter dated 5 April 1991 from the Permanent Observer of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations was addressed to the President of the Security Council. In accordance with the request therein contained, the letter is being circulated as a document of the Security Council.

* Reissued for technical reasons.

Annex

Letter dated 5 April 1991 from the Permanent Observer of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you a memorandum of the Government of the Republic of Korea concerning its membership in the United Nations.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and the enclosed memorandum circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Chang Hee ROE
Ambassador

Enclosure

Memorandum of the Government of the Republic of Korea

The Government of the Republic of Korea has made clear on previous occasions its position concerning membership of the Republic of Korea in the United Nations, particularly its determination to seek United Nations membership during the course of this year.

The Republic of Korea, as a peace-loving State willing and able to carry out all obligations set forth in the United Nations Charter, is fully qualified for membership in the United Nations. As a country which maintains almost universal diplomatic relations and as the world's twelfth largest trading nation, it is ready to make its due contribution to the work of the United Nations as a full member and in a manner commensurate with its standing in the international community.

The principle of universality cherished by the United Nations requires the admission of all eligible sovereign States that wish to join the United Nations. This principle gains more relevance than ever as the United Nations assumes an increasingly vital role in the post-cold war era. The unprecedented changes taking place in the international political environment, featuring a new spirit of reconciliation and cooperation, call for the resolution of Korea's membership question at long last.

As was eloquently manifested last year during the general debate of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, it has become the sense of the international community that the admission of the Republic of Korea to United Nations membership should be realized without further delay.

In seeking United Nations membership, the Republic of Korea reiterates its earnest hope that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) will also join the United Nations, either together with the South, or at the time the North deems appropriate. The Republic of Korea restates its position that it would welcome DPRK's membership.

Furthermore, the Republic of Korea holds the view that the parallel membership of both Koreas in the United Nations is entirely without prejudice to the ultimate objective of Korea's reunification. Parallel membership should constitute a powerful confidence-building measure in so far as it will represent a firm commitment of both Koreas to the provisions and principles of the United Nations Charter.

The unification of East and West Germany and of North and South Yemen, each of which had maintained separate membership in the United Nations, validates this view and disproves the contention that United Nations membership might serve to perpetuate or legitimize Korea's national division, thus hindering efforts for Korea's reunification.

It is a matter of fact that the international community has long recognized the existence of South and North Korea on the Korean peninsula. In reality, the Republic of Korea and the DPRK maintain diplomatic relations with 148 and 105 countries respectively. Ninety of these countries maintain concurrent diplomatic relations with both. Each also has separate membership in most intergovernmental organizations, including specialized agencies of the United Nations. Thus, Korea's United Nations membership, separate or simultaneous, will be a logical corollary of the international political reality.

In the sincere belief that United Nations membership will contribute to the process of Korean reconciliation and reunification, as well as enhance peace and security on the Korean peninsula, the Republic of Korea has made every effort in good faith to join the United Nations together with the DPRK during the course of last year, but without success.

Despite these efforts, however, the DPRK has adhered to the "single-seat membership" formula which is not only unworkable, but runs counter to the provisions of the United Nations Charter and the practices followed by the United Nations and its specialized agencies. The lack of support from the United Nations Member States with respect to this formula during the general debate last year reflects their disapproval of the North Korean formula.

The Government of the Republic of Korea remains hopeful of realizing the membership of both Koreas during the course of this year. However, if the DPRK continues to oppose this option and for any reason chooses not to join the United Nations, the Republic of Korea, exercising its sovereign right, will take the necessary step towards its membership before the opening of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

The Government of the Republic of Korea is convinced that, with the overwhelming support of the Member States of the United Nations for the legitimate cause of its membership, the Republic of Korea will be able to assume its rightful place in the United Nations in the months ahead.